Kansas Corn Growers Association

- Membership-based corn growers organization representing growers on legislative and regulatory issues.
- Actively works with other commodity and farm organizations to maximize the voice of Kansas corn producers.
- Affiliated with the National Corn Growers Association.
- Key customers for Kansas corn producers are the livestock industry, the ethanol industry and export markets.

Association Staff

Kansas Corn Commission

- Grower-funded, grower-governed advocacy organization working to secure the future of Kansas corn.
- Invests a half-cent per bushel.
- Research to improve production practices and find new uses for corn.
- Efforts to build domestic and foreign markets for corn.
- Created promising new markets for corn.

Grain Sorghum Producers Association

- Membership-based sorghum growers organization representing growers on legislative and regulatory issues.
- Was organized in 1976 by Kansas farmers.
- Legislative
  - From water quality and pesticides to ethanol and the farm bill, KGSPA is the recognized voice of the Kansas grain sorghum farmers in Topeka and in Washington DC.
- Regulatory
  - Works with the Kansas Department of Agriculture, EPA and other regulatory bodies to see needs and concerns of producers are heard.

Internship Position

- Focused on communications
  - Utilized social media
    - Twitter: @ksgraintrain
    - Facebook
    - Blog: kansasgrains.wordpress.com
    - Topics such as the use of biotechnology, production practices, harvest data, exposing HSUS and other hot topics relating to agriculture
- Water Sampling project with Syngenta
- Membership Recruitment
- Assist with program planning
- Drive the “corn car” in parades
- Various office jobs

Supervisor

- Jere White, Executive director
How I Got the Position

- April rolled around, still didn’t have any summer plans...
- Was encouraged to email him and ask if he knew of any opportunities.
- Association office had not had an intern in recent years, and based on my interest, shortly after was invited for an interview to discuss a spot on staff for the summer.
- Even though a position is not posted doesn’t mean there is not an opportunity!!

Intern Happenings

- Typically worked during normal office hours 8-5 M-F
- Mondays: Out of the office collecting water samples
  - Raw and treated samples from 8 locations at water treatment facilities, major rivers and watersheds in south east kansas.
- Tuesdays: Schedule pick up of samples to be sent to Syngenta research labs in North Carolina.
- Staff members turn in weekly calendars to Jere on what tasks were planned to do and what got accomplished.
- Daily morning staff meetings to discuss the day’s agenda.

Expectations

- Had to be independent, self motivated
- Time management and being aware of communication deadlines
- Required to communicate well
  - In person
  - In writing
  - On the telephone
- Leaving the intern in charge for 2 whole days?? O.k. Boss
  - I survived, and still had a job

Highlights

- Salary employee (~$6,000)
- Gained greater feel of the importance of commodity organizations
- National Corn Congress
  - Washington D.C.
  - Sub-committee meetings/general sessions
- Growth Energy
  - Strives to achieve energy independence, improve economic well-being and create a healthier environment for all Americans.
  - The Volumetric Ethanol Excise Tax Credit (VEETC) provides oil companies with an incentive to blend ethanol with gasoline and ensure market access.
- Blender pumps raising the amount of ethanol that can be blended with gasoline (give American consumers greater access to a fuel that can help us achieve energy independence goals)
- Met with state legislators at both the house and senate.

A few reflections...

- Realized the need in bridging gap between producers and consumers
- Social media’s impact...still amazes me
- However, being an advocate is not always easy
- Have you ever been targeted by animal rights activist groups for speaking out in support of agriculture?
- Learning how to react to their comments and actions has been extremely valuable

I continue to make advocating a part of daily life

If we don’t tell our story, someone else will.